

Washington, D.C. 20547

87-1683X



November 25, 1987

Bob
Dear Mr. Lamb:

In his October 20 letter (copy enclosed), Ken Lopez formally advised this Agency that the revised draft standards for the storage of classified material overseas, discussed briefly during an earlier meeting of the Overseas Security Policy Group (OSPG), have become policy and indeed were issued to the field in State telegram 324710 without clearance by or distribution to member OSPG agencies. I expressed my feelings about such a procedure at the November 19 OSPG meeting and received no satisfactory response.

When this subject was first raised it was my understanding that DS intended to task RSOs with surveying storage facilities to determine the impact the "proposed" revised draft standards would have on field operations before finalization. I was surprised that such a major policy change, which will significantly affect our operations overseas, was undertaken without specific clearance. Such action is contrary to OSPG practices. In the past, major policy issues, such as residential security, have been thoroughly, though quickly, reviewed and approved, with statements to the field cleared by all member agencies. This was clearly not the case in this instance.

After the October 1, 1987 OSPG meeting, which addressed the new standards, M/S sent an October 24 worldwide cable to all USIA facilities, with an information copy to DS, advising that stricter controls for storage were in the planning stages. We requested that our posts notify us of their existing classified holdings to determine how the draft revision would affect current operations. At the time, we were unaware of State's telegram to the field, issued four days earlier. Needless to say, there must be some confusion at posts as a result of these differing statements. We are following up with a cable clarifying the situation. With that said, Bill Catterson of my staff has discussed the revised standards and review mechanisms with DS/PRD.

Mr. Robert E. Lamb
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Diplomatic Security
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Washington, D.C. 20520

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We already know that a significant percentage of our posts will be unable to meet the standards, and many others will be able to comply only at considerable cost in time and money. The Department's action will result in unnecessary confusion with large numbers of facilities (both State and USIA) operating under waivers of one sort or another for a lengthy, indefinite period.

I think we will both be served by a degree of consistency in establishing a "timetable for full compliance" and we should coordinate these matters closely. I have assigned, by mutual agreement with DSS, a senior liaison officer at the Department who should be involved in questions of this nature.

While I am certainly in favor of enhancing the standards, I believe the new requirements may be somewhat restrictive and the language in which they are presented could easily lead to confusion. The distinctions tend to blur when we have four slightly differing sets of standards for "Confidential" and "Secret" material.

Separate USIS posts, under the current Joint Regulations, are not authorized to store TS material. Regarding the standards for Confidential and Secret storage, I believe a clearer approach would be to cite the latter standards (for criteria and non-criteria posts) followed by a summary of how the standard for Confidential differs. In my opinion we should go even further and agree on a uniform standard for both Confidential and Secret material. Implementing overly fine distinctions in standards is unlikely to make the desired impact on posts' practices.

Sincerely,



Bernard C. Dowling
Director
Office of Security

cc: All OSPG Members